FORUM
Facts, Outcomes, & Research... Useful for Managing

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS)
BY ELIZABETH K. DRAKE

A geographic information system, or GIS, is a method of combining geographic layers of data to give you a better understanding of a particular area. GIS is used for a variety of reasons: to map commute paths, analyze election results, assess natural disasters, predict storm patterns, and market areas for retail outlets. One final example we might best identify with, to map crime or offenders being supervised in the community.

There are two main reasons agencies should use GIS (www.gis.com). The primary benefit of GIS is to make better decisions by presenting information clearly through the use of a map. GIS is also flexible enough to allow decision-makers to analyze multiple scenarios. The second benefit of GIS is to improve organizational integration. Data sharing within an agency and between agencies is critical and beneficial to all since GIS technology is so data intensive.

In 1997, the National Institute of Justice created a program called Mapping and Analysis for Public Safety (MAPS). The purpose of the program is to promote the use of GIS technology in the criminal justice field. They provide many services such as grant funding, conferences, training centers, and research. The MAPS program is used by many criminal justice agencies. For example, MAPS assisted Washington D.C. metro area officials in analyzing and predicting where the 2002 snipers might target next.

The Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) is slowly beginning to use GIS technology in its work. DOC was awarded a grant from the Department of Justice in 2002 to implement a pilot to help supervise sex offenders. The web-based mapping tool was used in King, Pierce, and Spokane counties. It told how many sex offenders lived in a given area. It also identified the proximity of places such as schools and day care centers that sex offenders are prohibited to live near. Unfortunately, the grant money to fund this project ran out. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs has a very similar web tool called the Sex Offender Information Center (see web site of the month). The tool is intended to provide information to the public. It contains all Level II and Level III sex offenders in the state of Washington. You can search the website by county, address, and even offense type.

The Department's NE region also uses GIS technology on a daily basis. Rick Jost, a Community Corrections Officer in Spokane, maps offenders on supervision in Spokane County and its vicinity, a 2,500 square mile area. Rick also uses GIS technology as a member of the United State's Marshal's Eastern Washington Joint Fugitive Task Force. He identifies fugitives who may be associated with offenders under DOC supervision in the Spokane area

The DOC also assists other agencies by providing data for external GIS work in addition to doing our own GIS work. A social research group called the Urban Institute is using mapping for prisoner reentry to the community. Seattle is one of six cities to partner with the Urban Institute in this three-year project. The goal of the project is to identify neighborhoods where offenders are commonly released. Then, they will determine if the neighborhood is socially equipped to address the challenges of reentry. Reentry challenges include employment, crime, housing, and education. Aided by GIS, local stakeholders will develop strategies to help offenders transition to the community.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION..

PUBLICATION OF THE MONTH
"GIS for Everyone," 3rd edition (2003). By David E. Davis - GIS for Everyone, is a self-study workbook that provides an easy introduction to this powerful technology. You will find everything you need to get started with GIS in this new edition.

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH
http://ml.waspc.org

DEFINITION OF THE MONTH
Map: Any graphical representation of geographic information.

DOC MONTHLY STATISTICS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004
CONFINEMENT POPULATION **17,018**
Total Confinement..15,601
Work Release 631
In State Rented Beds..252
Out of State Rented Beds..534
COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS POPULATION
ACTIVE SUPERVISION 29,249
  RMA... 7,888
  RMB 6,819
  RMC 2,464
  RMD... 10,433
  Unclassified 1,645
MONETARY..593
INACTIVE STATUS 16,078

ESCAPES FROM SECURITY LEVELS 2-5, FOR FY05

	Date	Type	Return
Coyote Ridge CC	07/14/04	Facility	07/15/04
Olympic CC	08/13/04	Facility	-----------
WCCW	11/04/04	Work Crew	11/04/04
Larch CC	12/20/04	Work Crew	-----------

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CORRECTION
In the January 2005 issue of the Communiqué FORUM page, the chart below was incorrectly printed. The chart should have read as follows. For the complete article, please visit our website as listed above or go to www.doc.wa.gov.

PERCENT OF TOTAL FIELD POPULATION WHO ARE HOMELESS BY OFFENSE TYPE

Percent Statewide who are Homeless: 5.4%

Offense Type	Percent
Murder	2.4
Manslaughter	1.5
Sex Crime	8.3
Robbery	6.3
Assualt	6.0
Property	4.7
Drug	5.5
Unknown	4.2
Other	4.7